

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE FY04 EQIP RANKING CRITERIA NORTHEAST LOCAL WORK GROUP

Ranking the Applications – Using the Worksheet

Important - Before granting points to an application for any resource modifier:

- 1) The modifier must apply to the area to be treated under the application.
- 2) The application must include a conservation practice eligible for EQIP cost share or incentive payments, that will address the resource modifier for which points are being awarded.
- 3) The total ranking score awarded for a given resource consideration may not exceed the maximum score for that resource consideration.

SOIL RESOURCE CONSIDERATION (Maximum points = 150)

“There is a soil condition concern” (70 points)

This modifier addresses soil tilth, crusting, water infiltration, organic matter, compaction, and soil contaminants. Points are granted if there is sufficient indication that FOTG Quality Criteria is not met on the land included in the application. This may be based on case file information and applicant interview.

“Evidence of accelerated erosion on non-cropland” (75 points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that accelerated erosion is occurring on non-cropland. This may be based on case file information, aerial photo interpretation, topographic maps, and applicant interview. Types of erosion to consider are sheet and rill, wind, ephemeral, or permanent gullies with active head cutting or mass wasting.

“Streambank Stabilization” (80 points)

Grant points if there are streambank areas within pasture or cropland that need to be stabilized to halt excessive bank erosion and sediment loading are being treated by installation of practice 580 Streambank and Shoreline Protection. Also allow points for practices (treatment) that facilitate the regulation/exclusion of domestic livestock from streambank areas that are actively eroding.

WATER RESOURCE CONSIDERATION (Maximum points = 300)

“A buffer practice will be installed” (125 points)

Grant points if the application includes a buffer practice that will provide a water quality benefit. Filter strips, field borders, grassed waterways, hedgerow plantings, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, contour grass strips, grass buffer strips, and riparian forest buffers are all examples of conservation buffers. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, topographic maps, and applicant interview.

“A CNMP will be included (livestock operations)” (110 points)

Grant points if the application is a livestock operation with lands where animal manure is applied, and will include the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan that meets NRCS criteria. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview.

“Pest Mgt. will be included for crop or pasture” (110 points)

Grant points if the application includes crop or pasture where pest control is needed to reduce adverse effects on ground and/or surface water by including the development and implementation of the Pest Management practice. Evaluation may be based on soil interpretations, case file information related to pesticide risk analysis, and applicant interview.

“Heavy use areas need stabilization” (115 points)

Grant points if there is a need to stabilize small areas of short-term livestock containment to improve water quality and/or quantity. Evaluation may be based on soil interpretations, case file information, and applicant interview. The conservation practice “Heavy Use Area Protection” will be included in the application.

“Forest access roads deliver sediment to salmonid-bearing streams” (150 points maximum)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that forest (private, non-industrial) access roads are delivering sediment directly or indirectly to salmonid-bearing streams. Evaluation may be based on the applicant’s Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, aerial photography, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) definition for stream Types 1, 2, or 3 shall be the basis for determining if the stream is salmonid bearing. Use either DNR Typing Maps or fish presence maps developed locally through the Limiting Factors Analysis. The LWG has assigned points based on proximity.

Road adjacent to or crossing stream	150 pts
Road within 1/8 mile of stream	150 pts
Road within ¼ mile of stream	0 pts
Road within ½ mile of stream	0 pts
Road more than ½ mile of stream	0 pts

“Proposed contract area has a perennial or intermittent stream running through it or is adjacent to such a stream” (60 points)

Grant points if planning unit has a perennial or intermittent stream running through it or is adjacent to such a stream, and the proposed treatment will address a water quality issue that has its origin on the planning unit. Eligible water quality issues are water temperature above the state standard, sediment delivery to the stream and contamination from livestock waste. If the stream is not perennial it must at least be a defined tributary as indicated on a USGS quadrangle map. No points are granted for streams that do not show up as a defined stream channel on the USGS quadrangle map. Evaluation will be based on FOTG data/quality criteria, case file information and/or applicant interview.

“Improved irrigation efficiency on non-surface systems” (100 points)

Grant points for improving irrigation efficiency on non-surface systems by 10% or more above current conditions. Evaluation may be based on case file information or applicant interview.

PLANT RESOURCE CONSIDERATION (Maximum points = 250)

“Water Development is a factor for proper grazing distribution” (100 points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that lack of adequate water quantity or availability are limiting factors for achieving proper grazing distribution. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, the National Range and Pasture Handbook, and applicant interview.

“Livestock have uncontrolled access to riparian areas” (120 points)

Grant points if there are riparian areas that are not fenced and there is sufficient indication that grazing of domestic animals occur within these areas. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, and applicant interview

“Prescribed grazing will be applied” (100 points)

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply prescribed grazing on the proposed contract acres. The definition of prescribed grazing is the controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing animals managed with the intent to achieve a specified objective. The purposes are: to improve or maintain the health & vigor of the desired plant community; maintain or improve water quality and quantity, reduce soil erosion and maintain or improve soil condition; and improve or maintain animal health and productivity. It includes developing a grazing schedule for the operating unit to document expected quantity and quality of forage for each pasture; number of livestock by kinds and class, and periods of grazing, resting and other treatment for each management unit.

“Vegetative cover will be improved to solve resource problems” (115 points)

Grant points if improving existing vegetative cover will help solve another resource problem related to soil, water, air, or animals or help to comply with laws/regulations. Improving vegetative cover does not include the reseeding of hay fields as a normal part of a crop rotation.

“Use of native species in vegetative cover improvement practices” (50 points)

Grant points if only native species will be used in vegetative cover improvement seedings or plantings.

“Forest diseases, pests, or overstocking problems exist and will be treated” (125 points)

Grant points if forest diseases or pests exist or if overstocking of the site is causing a decline in forest health on Non-Industrial Private Forestland (NIPF). Evaluation may be based on case file information, applicant interview or information from cooperating consulting foresters or DNR

ANIMAL RESOURCE CONSIDERATION (Maximum points = 200)

“There are instream structures known to be barriers to upstream passage of salmonid fish on eligible lands” (150 points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that instream structures, including road culverts, on forestland (private, non-industrial), agricultural and range lands, are impairing upstream passage of salmonid fish. Evaluation may be based on the applicant’s Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, aerial photography, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) definition for stream Types 1, 2, or 3 shall be the basis for determining if the stream is salmonid bearing. Use either DNR Typing Maps or fish presence maps developed locally through the Limiting Factors Analysis

“A practice will be implemented to benefit terrestrial species occupying the proposed contract area” (100 points maximum)

Grant points if the application includes one of the following conservation practices and provides direct wildlife benefit for terrestrial species that occupy the proposed contract area. The LWG has assigned points for this modifier based on the proposed practices to be implemented.

Riparian Forest Buffer	100 pts
Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt.	100 pts
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt.	100 pts
Restoration & Mgmt. of Rare and Declining Habitats	100 pts

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS (Maximum points = 100)

“Planned practices will assist the producer in complying with laws/regulations” (80 points maximum)

Grant points if the application includes practices that will assist the person in complying with the Dairy Waste Law, AFO/CAFO regulations, or the Forest Practices Act. In order to qualify for points, compliance must be enforceable by an agency with the ability to impose fines or sanctions for violation. Points may not be granted if the applicant is under a court order to carry out a plan. Nor can EQIP be used to assist applicant come into compliance in sod busting or swamp busting situations. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview. LWG has assigned points based on regulation type.

Dairy Waste Law	0 pts
AFO/CAFO	80 pts
Forest Practices Act	80 pts

“Did you have an eligible EQIP application in the previous year that was not funded: Yes or No?” (20 points)

Yes	20 pts
No	0 pts